GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3792
ANSWERED ON:17.04.2002
HAJ PILGRIMS
RAM SHAKAL

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the contingent of Haj Pilgrims sent by the Government this year was the second largest in the world;

(b) if so, the number thereof in comparison to the previous year along with the facilities provided by the Government to them; and

(c) the sources from where the funds are mobilized for providing facilities to them?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) No Sir, it was the third largest in the world.

(b) The total number of Indians, who performed Haj through Haj Committee, Mumbai and private tour operators last year and this year, is as under :-

```
2001  - 118,512
2002  - 118,759
```

As regards facilities provided to the pilgrims, the welfare of pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the primary responsibility of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.However, in consultation with the Saudi authorities, the Government of India provide assistance to Indian pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a welfare measure. For this purpose, the Government of India sets up hospitals & dispensaries and deploys a number of doctors, nurses, other paramedics and supplies medicines for the use of pilgrims. It also deputes administrative staff to assist in the general welfare of pilgrims.

(c) The pilgrims themselves pay for all their expenses incurred during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.Accommodation units are hired in Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah for the pilgrims through the Consulate General of India, JeddahRentals are charged from the pilgrims. The facilities of transportation inside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, tented accommodation in Mina and Arafat and other necessary services are provided by various Saudi agencies. The payment on account of these services is made by Haj Committee through the Consulate General of India, Jeddah, after collecting the same from the pilgrims.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation, who is responsible for making arrangements for air transportation of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia and back, charges a subsidized airfare of Rs.12,000/- per pilgrim. This subsidized airfare is only provided to the pilgrims going through the Haj Committee, Mumbai. The total subsidy on account of this airfare of Haj pilgrims in the last three years is as follows :-

```
1999  - 098.46 crore
2000  - 118.83 crore
2001  - 148.36 crore (provisional)
```

The expenditure on sending doctors, nurses, & other paramedics, supply of medicines and other administrative staff for the welfare of pilgrims is borne by the Ministry of External Affairs.